

THE CHURCH

In the Province of North Carolina,

—BY—

REV. JOS. BLOUNT CHESHIRE, JR., D. D.

—AS READ BEFORE—

THE JOINT CENTENNIAL CONVENTION

—OF THE—

DIOCESES OF NORTH AND EAST CAROLINA,

—HELD AT—

Tarboro, N. C., May, 1890.

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THE CHURCH IN  
THE PROVINCE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

BY REV. JOS. BLOUNT CHESHIRE, JR.

The Church owes its first theoretical introduction into North Carolina to the Englishman's characteristic desire to reproduce English institutions in every corner of the earth where he makes for himself a home: its real beginnings came from the christian zeal of a few prominent colonial Churchmen, co-operating with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, in endeavoring to supply the scattered colonists with the ministrations of their mother Church.

The name Carolina was applied by the French Huguenot settlers of Florida in the years 1562 and 1564 to that part of the American continent lying north of the Spanish possessions, in honor of Charles IX. of France. In 1629 Charles I. of England granted to his Attorney General, Sir Robert Heath, the territory between 31° and 36° north latitude, and erected the same into a Province by the name of the Province of Carolina, reviving the old French name, but doubtless with reference to his own. This Province of Carolina was to be held of the King and his successors *in Capite* by Knight's service, by rendering, besides other things, "one circle of gold formed in the fashion of a crown, of the weight of twenty ounces, with this inscription ingraved upon it: DEUS CORONET OPUS SUUM, whensoever and as often as it shall happen, that we, our heirs or successors shall enter the said Region."

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Nothing was done towards the settlement of the country under this Patent of Charles I. but it is interesting as being the formal act whereby the name CAROLINA was authoritatively affixed by the English Crown to the region lying between Virginia and the Spanish settlements to the southward.

The first attempt at the actual settlement of the country, after the failure of Sir Walter Raleigh's schemes, so far as we know, was made by a clergyman of the Church. In 1653 the Virginia Assembly passed an act for the encouragement of "Roger Green, Clark," i.e. clergyman, in settling the Moratoc or Roanoke river and the south side of Chowan river. Nothing, however, seems to have come of this.

The permanent settlement of North Carolina is usually reckoned from the date of George Durant's deed for Durant's Neck in Perquimans County, March, 1661--2. At this time the Governor of Virginia seems to have exercised some sort of authority over the territory, as representing the English crown, but in 1663, and in 1665, Charles II. issued his two Charters to the Lords Proprietors, granting them the Province of Carolina; the limits in the former Charter being identical with those of Sir Robert Heath's Patent of 1629, while the latter extended those limits two degrees on the south, and a half degree on the north, making the bounds of the Province from  $29^{\circ}$  to  $36^{\circ}30'$  north latitude, and from the Atlantic Ocean westward to the South Sea.

Both the Charters of Charles II. expressly provide for a religious establishment, in accordance with the ecclesiastical laws of England, and for the building and endowment of Churches, Chapels and Oratories; though they permit the Lords Proprietors to grant liberty of conscience and of worship, upon such terms and under such restrictions as they may think proper, to those persons who could not in their private conscience conform to the Church of England.

In accordance with the provisions of the Charters, the Lords Proprietors in their "proposals" for settlers advertised far and wide the advantages of their Colony of Carolina on account of the religious liberty to be allowed all its inhabitants, upon condition that they would not interfere with the like liberty of others, and that they should be obedient to the laws of the country, as well ecclesiastical as civil. These proposals were industriously circulated, especially in New England and Barbadoes, and the general promise of religious toleration allowed by the Charters became widely known before the Proprietors published any scheme of government for their Province. Indeed, the Lords Proprietors seem at one time to have contemplated granting to the people the right of regulating ecclesiastical affairs at their own pleasure. In 1667 their instructions to Governor Stevens seem to go to this length, as they offer to allow the Assembly of the Province to choose such ministers as they may prefer, and pledge the Lords Proprietors not to interfere with them. No such action, however, was taken by the Assembly.

In 1669 the Lords Proprietors published their famous FUNDAMENTAL CONSTITUTIONS OF CAROLINA. These were never enforced in North Carolina, but they are to be noted as being the first formal establishment of the Church in the Colony *in theory*. It has frequently been alleged that those clauses of the Constitutions which provide that the Church of England shall be the only Church supported by grants from the public funds (it "being the only true and orthodox, and the national religion of all the King's dominions"), are contrary to the privileges secured to the people by the Charters. But it will be observed that these Fundamental Constitutions, while giving this support to the Church, are really much more explicit than either of the Charters in securing the fullest religious liberty to all who will subscribe themselves believers in God, even providing for the case of Jews and of the heathen. In provid-

ing for the support of the Church they are but carrying out the plain requirements of the Charters. Locke was one of the most tolerant of men, and his hand is more plainly seen in the provisions concerning religion than in any other part of these "Constitutions;" but he believed in the principle of a public religious establishment, and he incorporated it in the instrument. It is further characteristic of Locke that the Fundamental Constitutions deny all civil privileges to atheists.

Thus in theory we see the Church established in the Province of Carolina. Whether we take the Constitutions of Locke and the Lords Proprietors, or the Charters of Charles II., to be the fundamental law---in either case the Church was "by law established" in the Province. Other forms of religion were to be freely tolerated, but this alone was the true and orthodox Church, and the national religion of all the King's dominions.

But what of the people during all this time? They had nothing to do with all this prescribing of rights and duties and liberties and toleration, and they probably cared very little about it. The population in the first instance had come mostly from Virginia and had followed the courses of the creeks and rivers along the north side of Albemarle Sound. Later they crossed over to Bath, and spread up the Roanoke, and began to come into the southerly parts of the Province from New England and Barbadoes. But they were mostly men of small means, intent upon taking up good lands, and careless of all forms of religion---though owning some kind of allegiance to the Church of England, where they had any religious preference. This is contrary to the commonly accepted theory of our histories. They would have us believe that the first Colonists were men of great earnestness of religious feeling, chiefly Quakers and Baptists, who for conscience sake had abandoned their former homes in New England and in Virginia, to escape from the persecution of Puritans and Calvinists in the one

and of Churchmen in the other. Every one of our State historians accepts this view of our early settlement and magnifies it. I undertake to say that is absolutely and entirely false; that it not only lacks a preponderance of testimony in its favor but that *it is absolutely without any contemporaneous evidence whatever*. And not only so, but such evidence as we have leads to the conclusion that the great majority of our first settlers along the north side of Albemarle Sound, up the Roanoke, in Bath and Pamplico, and along the mouth of the Cape Fear, were by descent and by preference attached to the Church of their mother country---so far as they had any religious convictions or preferences. The space at command is too limited to allow of a satisfactory discussion of so difficult a question, difficult not in itself, but because it has been so long and so persistently misrepresented. Only a brief summary of the evidence can be given.

George Durant's settlement was in 1662; William Drummond was appointed Governor by Sir William Berkley in 1663. By the year 1672 the number of the colonists had very considerably increased on the streams flowing into the north side of Albemarle Sound and on both sides of the Chowan river; but the population was almost exclusively confined to these localities. In the Spring of 1672 William Edmundson, the first Quaker preacher who ever came to North Carolina, made a dangerous and toilsome journey on foot from the Virginia settlements to visit a family of Quakers living on Perquimans river. They had removed to North Carolina from New England in 1665. When upon a Sunday morning in the end of March William Edmundson appeared at their house, and they found that he and his two companions were Quakers---or, in their language, *Friends*, they were so overcome that they wept for joy "not having seen a Friend for seven years before." They soon called together their neighbors, who by Edmundson's own testimony were utterly ignorant of



his religious methods, and this Quaker preacher conducted the first public religious service in Albemarle. The next day he conducted another meeting a few miles off across the Perquimans river, and Tuesday he and his companions set out upon their return to Virginia. ✓ Edmundson made a number of converts at these two meetings, but his journal makes it plain that Henry Phillips and his family were the only Quakers whom he found in the settlements.

In November of the same year George Fox also visited the Colony of Albemarle. Instead of breaking through the swamps and forests by a direct journey on foot to the middle of the settlements, as Edmundson had done, he traveled from Nansmond in Virginia by way of Sommertown to "Bonner's Creek," i.e. Bennett's Creek, on horseback; and leaving their horses there, he and his companions took a canoe and came in by way of the Chowan river. He held a meeting at Hugh Smith's on the Chowan (which he calls "Macocomocock"), but he tells us in his journal that there were "no Friends inhabiting this part of the country." When he reached the region of Edmundson's ministrations he met with a very favorable reception, and found evidences of Edmundson's preaching in one or more persons who had been indoctrinated with Quaker principles thereby. Fox made a permanent impression upon the people along the north side of Albemarle Sound, and from this time we date the Quaker "meetings" in the region of Perquimans and Pasquotank. But it is plain from the journals of these two Quaker preachers, the first who visited this region, that they found none of their brethren in Albemarle save the single family of Phillips on Perquimans river. Fox testifies in positive and unequivocal language that there were none in the western section on Chowan river; and his closing words with reference to this visit are conclusive as to the general condition of the whole Colony before his coming: "Having visited the north part of Caro-



lina, and made a little entrance for the truth among the people there, we began to return again toward Virginia."

These journals are indirectly of almost equal weight in proving that the Colonists were not Baptists, as has sometimes been alleged. The fact that Fox and Edmundson met with no kind of religious worship or institutions among the people, the admitted fact that for ten years after the settlement of the country there was no public worship whatever, shows that the inhabitants were not religious refugees of any kind. Men who go out into the wilderness for freedom of religion are men who care enough about their religion to give public expression to it after they have gained the freedom which they sought. If the men who left Virginia and New England to come to Albemarle professed to be Baptists and Quakers, and pretended to be in search of liberty of conscience and of worship,---"freedom to worship God,"---we can have but little respect for their sincerity, since in their new homes they neglected the public worship of God altogether for so many years.

But we have other most weighty testimony directly in point, and in part contemporary. Henderson Walker came into the Colony about 1679. He at one time or another held nearly all the most important offices in the government, dying in the office of Governor in 1704. He was one of the most admirable men who ever administered the affairs of Albemarle. He had been brought into personal contact and intercourse with the men associated with Durant in the settlement of 1662, and had made minute official investigations into the circumstances of that settlement. He had no motive to tempt him to misrepresent the facts, and his character is too high to allow any suspicion of untruthfulness to attach to his testimony. And though his testimony is direct, it is given incidentally. It was a matter of no concern to him what might have been the religious belief of the first settlers. Writing to the Bishop of London in 1703, and describing the spiritual

destitution of the people, he says, "George Fox, some years ago, came into these parts, and by strange infatuations did infuse the Quakers' principles into some small number of the people; who did and hath continued to grow ever since very numerous by reason of their yearly sending in of men to encourage and exhort them to their wicked principles." The first two missionaries sent to North Carolina by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, for permanent work, were the Rev. Wm. Gordon and the Rev. James Adams. They both testify that the only body of dissenters in the Colony were the Quakers. There were none of these in Chowan, nor in Curratuck, and apparently none south of the Sound in Pamlico. They were a strong minority in Pasquotank, and possibly a majority in Perquimans. Both these ministers met with a good deal of opposition from the Quakers, and they write fully and freely upon the subject. It is perfectly certain from their letters that there were no Baptists at all in the Colony, no Quakers to speak of outside of the two counties named, and that the few Presbyterians scattered about among the people willingly accepted the ministrations of the missionaries, and brought their children to be baptized into the Church. The claim that the Quakers had been the original settlers appears for the first time in Mr. Gordon's report to the Society May 13th, 1709. Mr. Gordon says he heard of such a "pretence" on their part; "but this," he says, "(according to the best accounts I could get) seems false in fact,---that religion being scarce heard of there till some years after the settlement; it is true some of the most ancient inhabitants, after George Fox went over, did turn Quakers." Here is both the statement of the fact and the explanation of the Quakers' claim. They could truly claim that some of the first settlers were Quakers, but they had become Quakers after their settlement in Albemarle. Even here, however, there is no suggestion that they had come as religious refugees.

All the early authorities go to show that the first settlers were very much the same class of men as those who on our frontiers are to-day the pioneers of civilization; men of small means, of restless spirit, of immense courage and energy and independence; but careless in regard to the outward observances of religion. They were mostly of English blood, and by descent and by baptism members of the Church of England, but ignorant of her principles and indifferent to her claims, though accustomed to profess a certain kind of allegiance to her worship and ministry. Both the charters of King Charles provided for the establishment of the Church; the Fundamental Constitutions, published in 1669, formally enacted that the Church of the mother country should be the Church of Carolina. This was known and recognized by all; but they were in no hurry to lay taxes for the Church's support. They had gotten along pretty well so far; meanwhile there were the Quaker meetings, the pious could go to them. This was the condition of things at the end of the 17th century. With the beginning of the 18th there is a faint stir of life.

Under God the Church in America owes more to the Rev. Thomas Bray than to any other one man who ever lived. He founded the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; he established public libraries throughout all the American Colonies; he was instrumental in supplying schools and teachers for Indians and negroes as well as for the whites; and he came over himself and labored for the upbuilding of the church, as commissary of the Bishop of London in Maryland. He seems to have proposed visiting Albemarle, for under date of December 20th, 1699, the Lords Proprietors wrote to the Governor and Council concerning "the Reverend Doctor Bray, a learned, pious, and charitable man, coming into America Suffragan and Commissioner to the Bishop of London, your Diocesan, and designing to give you a

'visit.' They are directed to entertain him, and to charge the cost to the public account. He did not make the purposed visit to Albemarle, but he sent a number of tracts and catechisms for popular distribution, and a little later he sent a clergyman, one Daniel Brett, and £100 worth of books for a public library to be kept at Bath. We know nothing of Mr. Brett, but that he proved to be an unworthy man who brought great grief and shame to the friends of the Church. After about six months service he disappears from our view.

But the incorporation of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the mission of Dr. Bray stirred up the friends of the Church in Albemarle, and gave them hopes of seeing the Church at last set up in this new Colony. In November, 1701, the Assembly passed an Act constituting each of the four precincts in Albemarle, i.e. Chowan, Perquimans, Pasquotank and Curratuck, and also one precinct, Pamlico, in Bath County, parishes, and appointing a select vestry in each. The vestry were empowered to lay a tax of not more than five shillings per poll to build churches, buy glebes, employ ministers, etc.; the minister's salary was fixed at £30 *per annum* in commodities of the country, equivalent to about £16 sterling. It may be interesting to see the names of the Chowan vestry appointed by this act of 1701. They were the Hon. Henderson Walker, Col. Thomas Pollock, William Duckenfield, Esq., Mr. Nicholas Crisp, Mr. Edward Smithwick, Mr. John Blount, Mr. Nathaniel Chevin, Mr. William Banbury, Col. William Wilkinson, Capt. Thomas Luten, and Capt. Thomas Blount. A church was built near the site of the present town of Edenton, and another was begun in Perquimans, but not finished.

In 1704 the Rev. John Blair was sent out by the Society, upon funds supplied by Lord Weymouth, that he might see what could be done for the Church. He remained only a few months, and returned with a rather discouraging

account of the prospect. He reported that it was useless to expect the people to provide a sufficient support for the ministers who were needed. He had been by the Governor appointed to take charge of the parish of Chowan, but upon leaving for England, he requested the vestry to expend the salary due him in charity to the poor.

In 1708 the Rev. William Gordon and the Rev. James Adams were sent out by the Society as permanent missionaries, with an annual stipend from the Society. They were put in charge of the four parishes of Albemarle; Chowan and Perquimans being assigned to Mr. Gordon, and Pasquotank and Curratuck to Mr. Adams. They were both, as was also Mr. Blair, most exemplary men and faithful ministers. Their labors are sufficiently described in their letters, which may be read in the second volume of Dr. Hawks's History of North Carolina. Mr. Gordon, however, had remained but a few months, when he felt obliged to return to England. Mr. Adams labored most faithfully for nearly three years, and died towards the end of the year of 1710, in consequence of the hardships and trials which he had so faithfully borne.

The Act of 1701, and the select vestries appointed by it, continued until the Act of March 12th, 1710--11, which appointed new vestries in all the parishes, and which marks a new period in our ecclesiastical affairs. An act had been passed in 1708 somewhat modifying that of 1701, but not making any essential change, nor appointing new vestries, though it somewhat enlarged the powers of the vestry in employing and dismissing a minister. But there was no important change in the ecclesiastical law during the period from 1701 to 1711. It is necessary to bear this in mind. In 1704 a most unjust "Church Act" was passed in South Carolina by the contrivance of Sir Nathaniel Johnston. Though it professed to be highly advantageous to the Church, it was really a political measure. It was bitterly opposed by the only clergyman



in South Carolina; and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel held a special meeting in London upon hearing of it, and resolved to send no more missionaries to South Carolina until it had been repealed. Upon an appeal from South Carolina, the House of Lords declared it void, as being against the Charters; and proceedings were threatened, and even begun, for declaring that the Lords Proprietors had forfeited their franchise.

Just at this juncture Henderson Walker died, in May, 1704, and Sir Nathaniel Johnston sent from South Carolina Robert Daniel, a politician of rather doubtful antecedents, to succeed Walker as deputy Governor. It happened that at the beginning of Gov. Daniel's administration the Act of Parliament, passed in the first year of Queen Anne, imposing the oaths of allegiance to the new sovereign, was officially transmitted to the Governor of North Carolina. Daniel tendered the oaths to the members of the Council and of the Assembly. The Quakers being unable to swear in the usual form, were thereby deprived of their places, and at once began a most bitter attack upon Daniel, sending an agent to England to represent their interests. For several years the government of Albemarle was a scene of unceasing contention and disorder. The Quakers, in order to have a handle by which to move the popular mind, took up their old opposition to the Vestry Act of 1701, and in Perquimans and Pasquotank created much feeling against the Church. On this account our historians have confounded our troubles in 1704 with those of the same date in South Carolina; and it has been asserted, and repeated from one to another, that Gov. Daniel had been sent by Sir Nathaniel Johnston for the purpose of effecting in the northern Colony the ecclesiastical arrangements just carried out in the southern; and that a like Act for excluding dissenters from all places of trust or of profit in the Colony was passed by our Assembly of 1704. Such a confounding of the two govern-

ments was perhaps natural fifty or seventy-five years ago, but is inexcusable now. "The Colonial Records of North Carolina," published by Col. Wm. L. Saunders, show indirectly, but still sufficiently, that there never was any such legislation in North Carolina; and there is contemporary evidence that Gov. Daniel was extremely indifferent to the interests of the Church. The troubles of 1704 in North Carolina were of a political character. They arose in the first place out of the exclusion of the Quaker members of the Council and of the Assembly, by the imposition of the oaths of allegiance, which were wholly political in their origin and intention. Being thus forced into opposition to the administration, the Quakers revived their old complaints against the Vestry Act of 1701, and strove to make it appear that they were fighting the battle of the people against ecclesiastical oppression. But that this was not the real point at issue is proved by the fact that some of the strongest and most zealous Churchmen, especially Edward Moseley, were leaders against the party represented successively by Govs. Daniel, Glover, and Hyde. In truth the history of this period is exceedingly obscure; and it is probable that whatever may have been the political principles or interests involved in its struggles, they soon became inextricably mingled with local and personal prejudices and passions, so that it is impossible for us now to disentangle their confused threads.

It is in the midst of these sad disturbances that we get our first account of the religious conditions of the people of the new government. The letters and reports of the Revs. Messrs. Blair, Gordon, and Adams set it forth with sufficient fullness. There was no organized religious dissent in the Colony except the Quakers, who were confined to the two precincts of Perquinans and Pasquotank. Mr. Gordon reckoned them as one-tenth of the whole population; Mr. Adams, as perhaps a seventh. It is likely that both these estimates apply only to Albemarle, leaving out



Bath, where there were no Quakers to speak of. A few Presbyterians were in Pasquotank, but they all conformed to the Church under the godly ministry of Mr. Adams. A little Colony of Huguenots from Virginia had recently settled in Bath County; these also conformed willingly to the Church, as the Huguenots in America have usually done. The rest of the population on both sides of Albemarle Sound and along the Pamlico were nominally churchmen, though, as has already been said, they were for the most part ignorant of church principles, and careless of religious obligations. Yet, with all their ignorance and carelessness there was never a time from 1701 to 1776 when the people of North Carolina did not persist in asserting through their legislative assemblies that the Church of the mother country was the Church of the Province.

It may be said in reply, that this was not the Act of the people of North Carolina, but only of a few individuals; that the Act of 1701 was due to Henderson Walker, the Act of 1708 to William Glover; and that the subsequent legislation of the same character was due to the exertions of Swann, of Pollock, of Moseley, or of other particular men. But these men were North Carolinians, and the very best of North Carolinians. What they did was but the expression of the highest and best feeling and thought of the Colony. They exerted only such influence as such men should exert, and always will exert, in the communities of which they form a part. Certainly the churchmen of that day compare favorably with their opponents, Carey, Porter, Lowe, *et id omne genus*. Why did such men insist upon the establishment and support of the Church by the State? We can see now that their system was a false one, and that in the end the supposed state support was really the ruin of the Church's cause. But to them the Church was an essential part of a well ordered commonwealth. In the midst of a half-reclaimed wilderness, and under innumerable difficulties and perplexities

and discouragements, they were endeavoring to reproduce English civilization and English institutions upon the shores of America. They remembered the part so lately taken by the Church in delivering England from the tyranny of the Stuarts and from the superstition of Rome; they appreciated her wide intellectual and spiritual liberty; they were proud of her great scholars and divines. They felt that the Church was best fitted to cultivate and to develop the rude population which was growing up in these western wilds, and at that same time to keep them close to the best memories and traditions of their race. The leading men in North Carolina at that day had sufficient intelligence and taste to be repelled by the ignorance and narrowness which to a very great extent characterized the dissenters of the Colony; while, being themselves active politicians, it is but too likely that they lacked that impartial and discriminating spirit and that generous religious sympathy, which would have enabled them to recognize under its forbidding exterior the piety and godliness which animated many an ignorant Quaker, who seemed to them only a contentious opposer of truth and common sense. While the leaders must be supposed to have taken some such view of the situation, the mass of the people accepted the establishment of the Church as being part of the necessary machinery of civilization. They were not forward to put the laws in operation, but it was well to have at least some nominal religion for their country.

Thus the ecclesiastical establishment was not only in accordance with the fundamental law as set forth on the two Charters; it also expressed the will of the people of the infant commonwealth. But after all, nothing could have been more disadvantageous to the Church in the end. This legal establishment exasperated the opposition of dissenters, and gave them a handle against the Church, while the pretended support was altogether illusory. The parish

revenues provided by law were never adequate to the support of the minister or to the building of churches. Private liberality always had to maintain the one and to build the other. For example, it was only in the parish of St. Paul's, Chowan, that the services of the Church seem to have been kept up with anything like regularity during the first part of the last century; and from the best data attainable it appears that the whole sum paid by that parish to its ministers for the first ten years, from 1701 to 1711, was only about fifty-five pounds, or possibly less, in the commodities of the country, equivalent to not more than twenty-five pounds sterling. An establishment which practically met the wants of nine-tenths, or at least six-sevenths of the people, could hardly be called very unreasonable or oppressive, upon the accepted principles of those days. From a purely selfish point of view the money brought into the Colony by the missionaries (during this first period of ten years it must have been between £300 and £400 sterling), the advantage of their character and intelligence upon the new settlements and the ignorant people, the benefit to the young of the schools here and there established by their efforts and maintained as part of their work, and the books circulated among the people, were a very large return for the pitiful sums paid to the missionaries by the people.

The year 1711 was a notable, though not a happy one for the Province of North Carolina. The new Governor, Edward Hyde, had arrived towards the close of the preceding year, and in March 1710--11 the Assembly met. Having for years suffered from the uncertainties of the Proprietary rule, with its deputy governors holding under the Governor of the South Carolina, the Assembly, upon meeting under a Governor appointed for this Province with no dependence upon the Governor or government to the southward, passed an act ignoring the Charters, and asserting that this Province was annexed to, and a member

of, the Crown of England. They claimed their rights as British subjects, and asserted that the constitution and laws of England were the law of the Province, so far as the same were "compatible with our way of living and trade." The act goes on to provide that the English laws for the establishment of the Church and for the toleration of Protestant Dissenters shall be in force in North Carolina. This is the first enactment of our local Assembly ascertaining and declaring the position of dissenters in the Province. The Charters had merely permitted the Lords Proprietors to grant freedom of religion under such restrictions as they might see fit. The Fundamental Constitutions had contained specific regulations for carrying this permission into effect; but the Fundamental Constitutions had themselves never been put into effect in the Province of North Carolina. This Act of 1711 therefore was the first law upon the subject. It put dissenters upon the same footing as dissenters in England, and settled the question for the rest of our Provincial period.

The law referred to---commonly known as the Act of Toleration---is I. William and Mary St. 1. c. 18. It is entitled An Act "for exempting their majesties' protestant subjects, dissenting from the Church of England, from the penalties of certain laws." It does not profess to be an act for granting freedom of religion or of worship in general, but only to certain classes. It was framed expressly to exclude Romanists and Unitarians. But as there were no Papists or Unitarians in the Province, it practically covered the case of all dissenters in North Carolina, and it had been drawn for the very purpose of meeting the case of the classes to which they belonged. The terms of the Act were, in brief, that all penalties imposed for non-conformity should be remitted in the case of Protestant Dissenters who did not deny the doctrine of the Trinity, upon their taking the oaths of allegiance and the test oath (or affirming to the same, if Quakers); that

their places of worship should be registered in the Court of the Bishop, the Arch-Deacon, or the County Sessions; and that the doors of their places of meeting should be unbolted during their time of worship or other assembly. In the case of their ministers, besides the oaths before mentioned, they were to subscribe the Articles, with a reservation as to those which related to ecclesiastical government and infant baptism. This latter provision was aimed against Romanists and Unitarians, as it was understood that the doctrinal statements of the Articles were in accordance with the belief of the great body of English Protestants.

Thus the laws affecting dissenters continued until the Revolution. It is probable that in very few cases were dissenting ministers required to take the oaths or to register the places of religious worship in the County Court, though it was sometimes done. The records of the County Court of Edgecombe contain an entry which illustrates this point, and shows the practical application of the law. During the September term of the County Court for the year 1761, on Thursday of Court, before Aquila Sugg, William Haywood, Duncan Lamon, and Joseph Howell, the Justices holding said Court, "Johnathan Thomas, a Non-conforming Preacher, produced an Ordination Writing signed by George Graham, and John Moore, the Pastors of the Baptists ordaining him to [go] forth and preach the Gospel according to the Tenets of that Church, and he thereupon took the Oaths of Allegiance and subscribed the Test, appointed for that Purpose." These oaths and test were also required of all civil officers, and of ministers of the Church at the time of their ordination. So far as they had any religious significance they were directed against the Roman Church, and were not objected to by Protestant Dissenters.

Only one case has come to notice where it has been charged that there was any attempt to make use of this



Act of Toleration to harass the dissenters in the Province. In 1740---June term---a number of Baptists applied to the County Court of Craven County for permission to build a chapel. At the same time affidavits were made charging them with sundry misdemeanors. The Court took their recognizances to appear at the September term, and postponed their petition to the same time. At that term, nothing appearing against them, their petition was granted, and they took the oaths, subscribed the test, and assented to the XXXIX Articles with certain reservations. It does not appear that any wrong was done to any one in these proceedings, though the Court certainly exceeded their powers, when they undertook to examine these persons upon the Articles. It seems likely that the misdemeanors charged against the petitioners had reference only to some irregularity in connection with their public worship; and the Court, being convinced of this, very properly passed over the matter, and granted the license prayed for upon their compliance with the terms of the Act of Toleration.\*

After this digression we turn again to the year 1711. The Colony had lately been considerably increased by the settlements made by the French, Swiss, and German Protestants at Newbern, under Baron DeGraffenreid. These, though of Calvinistic faith, signified their desire to be included within the established Church, and took measures to have ministers ordained for them by the Bishop of London, and also to introduce the Book of Common Prayer in their own language.

In this year, or at the end of the preceding year, the Rev. John Urnstone arrived in Albemarle and took up his residence in Chowan precinct.

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\*The statement sometimes seen as a wandering paragraph in the newspapers, that these persons, or some others in a like case, were imprisoned or otherwise punished *because they were Baptists*, is absurd upon its face. It would have been utterly illegal, and would have subjected the perpetrators to heavy penalties by way of damages.

Though Gov. Hyde met with some opposition at first, it soon disappeared, and all seemed to promise a happy administration. At the Assembly in March, Good Friday was set apart as a public fast day, and Mr. Urnstone preached before them, and administered the Holy Communion. The Vestry Act passed was probably not substantially different from the one previously in force, except that it left out the provision concerning the annual hiring of the minister, and abridged the power of dismissal. But on the other hand it did not give the minister a seat in the vestry, at which Urnstone made bitter complaint. He gives a most unfavorable account of a meeting of the vestry of some parish which he does not name. He is not worthy of credit where he had any interest involved, and his account is inconsistent with the character of at least some of the members of the vestry. In truth Urnstone is the most disgraceful character in the history of the Church in America. He was scurrillous, profane, intemperate, and mendacious. He did more harm to the cause of the Church in North Carolina than any man who has ever figured in our history, and it is utterly incredible that he should have been allowed for ten years to blast the prospects of the Church in the Province by his presence. Yet so it was. His letters are a tissue of abuse, vulgarity, and falsehood---though not lacking in a certain coarse humor, and considerable keenness of observation. His appearance upon the stage of action is one of the events which mark and which darken the records of 1711.

Before Gov. Hyde had fairly gotten into the administration of his government after the flight of Carey, came the terrible Indian outbreak and massacre of September 22nd. We can hardly realize the horror and hopelessness of the situation when from the Pamlico to the new settlements on the Neuse all seemed swept away in blood in one awful night. Reading the meagre accounts which have come down to us it seems amazing that there should have



been anything saved from the wreck. The whole country for weeks after seems to have been utterly unprotected, and at the mercy of the merciless savages.

For a year or two it would have been impossible for the most diligent missionaries to have accomplished anything. The Rev. Giles Rainsford, sent by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, arrived in Albemarle in May, 1712, and was kindly received by the new Governor, and other of the principal inhabitants. He and Mr. Urnstone entered into an agreement whereby Mr. Rainsford was to supply the country south and west of Albemarle Sound and the Chowan river, while Mr. Urnstone was to confine himself to the region north and east of the same waters. This agreement, however, was not long observed by Mr. Rainsford. He very soon removed from the south shore to the upper part of Chowan, and thence, after a few months to Virginia, where he took a cure from Lady Day to Michaelmas 1713. He may have officiated within the bounds of Albemarle after this time, and he seems to have interested himself a good deal in the remains of the Chowan and other Indian tribes living on the frontier between the two governments, but he returned to England in 1716, and we hear no more of him.

Gov. Eden took the oath of office in May, 1714. The second session of the Assembly after the beginning of his administration put forth in November, 1715, a revision of the Laws of the Province, and among others a new and enlarged Vestry Act. It was probably only a re-enactment of the laws on the same subject passed in 1701, 1708, and 1711, in its essential features, but it increased the number of parishes from five to nine, and allowed the vestry to fix the salary of the minister, at any sum not less than fifty pounds in the currency of the Province. An act was also passed for the suppression of vice and profaneness, and the

better observance of the Lords' Day, January 30th, May 29th, and September 22nd. \*

The Act of 1715 continued in force, new parishes being from time to time erected by the Assembly, until 1741. The provision thereby made for the Clergy was meagre enough, though liberal, considering the condition of the country. There was, however, little disposition on the part of the vestries to put the law into operation; and there were no clergymen to do the service required.

In October, 1718, Commissary Johnston of South Carolina, by the direction of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, sent the Rev. Ebenezer Taylor to Albemarle. Mr. Taylor spent his first year upon the south-west shore of Chowan, living with Mr. Duckenfield, and taking great pains to instruct his negro and Indian slaves, several of whom he baptized. He was stopped in this good work by a popular prejudice, which shows itself again and again in Colonial days, that the slave who was baptized was thereby manumitted. From the south shore of Chowan Mr. Taylor removed to Perquimans, and thence to Bath and the country to the south. Mr. Urnstone says that he was old and feeble, and very unfit for the work. He was certainly diligent, faithful, and devout. He rejected the legal provision made for the clergy and lived upon the voluntary offerings of the people, as did others of our Colonial clergy. He very much deplored the irreligion of the people, and the carelessness of even the professed Christians. They had been so long unaccustomed to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, that he could not prevail upon them to come to it; they seemed struck with fear that it would be to their condemnation. Mr. Taylor's end was a sad one. Making a missionary tour from Bath to

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\*January 30th, and May 29th, in the English Calendar commemorate respectively the Execution of Charles I., and the Restoration of Charles II. September 22nd was by our Provincial Assembly appointed to be observed as a day of fasting and prayer in commemoration of the awful Indian massacre of September 22nd, 1711.

Core Sound in February, 1720, he was exposed in an open boat for ten days in very severe weather, and died on an island near the mouth of Neuse river. He was buried on Harbour Island by men who were there hunting hogs; and there were very grave suspicions of foul play, since it was afterwards discovered that they had taken possession of money or other property which he had with him to the amount of two hundred and ninety pounds. This was eventually recovered by his administrators.

The death of Mr. Taylor left Mr. Urnstone again the sole minister in the Colony. But to the happiness of all parties he took a sudden leave in March, 1721, acquainting no one with his intentions save Col. Moseley, in whose hands he left his plantation and other interests in Albemarle. We are so thankful to be rid of him that we will not pause to moralize upon his character.

Very little is known of the scattered congregations for some years following Urnstone's departure. The Rev. John Newman was sent out by the Society in the Autumn of 1721 to succeed him in Chowan, but he died after only six months' service, leaving a widow who seems to have been generously treated by the parish and by the people generally.

In the stormy times of Burrington and Everard, two ministers, Thomas Bailey and John Blacknall, appear for a moment in the midst of the tumult, and come in for a share of the scurrillous abuse of the period, which some of our later writers have repeated. There is, however, no sufficient evidence upon which to base an estimate of their character or of their work. \*

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\*The Vestry of St. Thomas' Church, Bath, and also the Vestry of Hyde precinct in 1726 petitioned the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in favor of Mr. Bailey, and testified of his character and work for the three years which he spent in North Carolina.

As to Mr. Blacknall's having married a white man to a negro woman—or a mulatto most likely—the fact that he informed against himself is in his favor. He had probably been imposed upon; or being a new comer

Again, in 1732, the Rev. Bevil Granville, a clergyman induced by Lord Baltimore to leave England for Maryland, happened to be landed in North Carolina, and was persuaded to spend a year in Chowan, where his ministrations seem to have been very acceptable to the people.

Upon the Cape Fear there was no organized parish until 1729. But the year previous the Rev. John Lapierre, a French Huguenot, who had been ordained by the Bishop of London in 1708, and for many years had served a congregation of his own people in South Carolina, called St. Dennis' Parish, came into the region of the Cape Fear river upon the invitation of the people, and with the consent of Commissary Garden. For a while he was supported by the voluntary gifts of the people. Afterwards the newly appointed vestry laid a parish rate for his support. After a few years he was supplanted, according to his own account, by the Rev. Richard Marsden, who offered his services gratuitously. Mr. Marsden had himself been a minister in South Carolina from 1705 to 1709, but had now become an inhabitant of New Hanover, and was chiefly engaged in planting and trading. He was anxious to be appointed to this field by the Society, but his application seems not to have been favorably received. He officiated also for a while in Onslow. At this same time, 1732, the Rev. Mr. Jones, of Virginia, officiated once a month in Bertie.

It is during this period of transition from Proprietary to Royal rule that we first find another body of dissenters besides the Quakers rising to notice. Paul Palmer, of Perquimans, the first Baptist preacher in North Carolina, began his work about 1727, and from this date the Baptists grew stronger and stronger in the Province. There was

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in America, he may have been ignorant of the law. Having inadvertently committed a breach of the local law, he could only come forward and submit to the Court, and lessen the penalty as much as possible by claiming half of it. Save this one matter there is not a word against him.

no real provision made for the spiritual wants of the people, and so they gradually forgot their faint traditional attachment to the Church, and went to such religious meetings, Baptist or Quaker, as they could find.

One sign of life shows itself in this period of darkness. Mr. John Boyd, a graduate of the University of Glasgow, and for some years a physician in Virginia, went from North Carolina, our first candidate for Holy Orders, in 1732, and after having been ordained in England, returned, and became the minister in the North-West Parish, of Bertie. There were no dissenters in this parish, and the people seemed eager for his services. He reported to the Society that private subscriptions had been started to build four chapels. In 1737 Commissary Garden wrote to the Bishop of London that he heard bad reports of Mr. Boyd, that he was intemperate and neglected his duties; but about this time he seems to have died, still one of the Missionaries of the Society.

Gov. Burrington was succeeded in 1734 by Gabriel Johnston. There was no legislation under his administration affecting the general interests of the Church until the Act of 1741; c. xxiii.

A Vestry Act had been passed in 1729, but it is doubtful whether it was ever operative. We are unacquainted with its precise character, as it has never been printed. It seems most probable that up to 1741 the original Vestry Act of 1771, as modified by the Acts of 1708, 1711, and 1716, remained in force. None of these acts made any provision for the election of vestrymen by the people. The vestrymen for each parish were named in those acts, and each parish vestry was a close corporation, independent and irresponsible.

The Act of 1741 provided that the Vestry should be chosen on Easter Monday of every alternate year beginning in 1742, by the freeholders of the parish in an election to be held by the Sheriff. Besides the five parishes created by the Act of 1701, the four added in 1715, and six by

special acts from 1715 to 1740, the act of 1741 added two new ones, making the whole number seventeen. The vestrymen were required to take the usual oaths and to subscribe a declaration that they would not oppose the liturgy of the Church. Professed dissenters were, as in former legislation, allowed to decline to serve, if elected upon the vestry, though they were free to serve, if they chose to do so. In short, the act of 1741 is substantially the same as the former law, except as regards the biennial election of the vestry by the freeholders of the parish, and the power now given the vestry to withdraw the stipend from a minister guilty of scandalous immorality. The provision of 1715, allowing the vestry to fix the minister's salary, but setting the minimum at fifty pounds in the currency of the country, was continued in this act of 1741.

The marriage act passed the same year, 1741, c. I., has been quoted as if it conferred upon clergymen of the Church the privilege of performing marriages, which it withheld from other ministers; but a careful examination of our legislation will show that the Assembly of the Province never professed to give to the clergy such a right, but only recognized a right which rested upon prescription. Our earliest colonial legislation provided that the civil magistrate might perform this office, *upon the express ground of necessity, because there were no clergy*. As soon as ministers of the Church came into the Province they were recognized as having this right, without any act of the Assembly. The act of 1715 distinctly recognizes this, and only gives the magistrates the right to join persons in marriage in cases where no minister is to be had. The act of 1741 c. I. simply brings forward this feature of the former legislation in slightly altered phraseology, and declares the right to be in the clergy. Furthermore, in 1741 there was no organized body of dissenters in the Province, and, so far as we know, not a single dissenting minister who claimed any



ministerial authority to perform the marriage ceremony, or considered that a part of his pastoral duties or functions.\*

The ministers of the Church in the Province of North Carolina in 1741 were the Rev. Mr. Garzia of St. Thomas's Church, Bath; the Rev. James Moir, who had lately come from South Carolina to St. James's Church, New Hanover; the Rev. Richard Marsden, who by this time had ceased officiating, and who died about the end of the year 1742; and the Rev. John Lapierre before mentioned, who, being ousted from New Hanover by Mr. Marsden's gratuitous ministrations, seems to have gone to Newbern about 1735, and to have remained in those parts until his death, which did not occur, as we have reason to believe, earlier than the year 1755. It may be mentioned here, though this is anticipating the proper order of events, that there was at this time on the Cape Fear, where he had lived since 1729, a certain Christopher Bevis, in Holy Orders, who in 1748, after Mr. Moir's departure, for a moment resumed the ministerial character, and was forced by the necessities of the people to exercise the sacred functions which ill health had caused him to lay aside since 1728. But he relapsed as suddenly into oblivion after a single letter to the Secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

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\*It seems probable that all through the Colonial period the people acted upon the Common Law principle that *consent*, in whatever public and formal manner expressed, followed by cohabitation, constituted a valid marriage; and though the law might prescribe some special manner of consent, and provide a means of its certification, and the preservation of the evidence thereof, it would not deny validity to such marriages, however defective the contract might be in regard to legal formalities. We know that from the beginning of the Quaker meetings they married after their own fashion, calling in neither minister nor magistrate. And the Presbyterian marriages, performed by their own ministers before the enabling act of 1766 c. IX., and *in direct violation of the law*, which required all marriages to be either by license or by publication of banns, were held to be legal. It is more than probable that the law upon the subject was but carelessly observed in the settlements remote from court houses and clerks. The sanctity of marriage depends not upon the mode of solemnization, but arises out of the relation itself.



Mr. Garzia had come to St. Thomas's Church, Bath, about 1735. He was a faithful and devoted minister. He died November 29th, 1744, from injuries received by a fall from his horse in returning from a visit to a sick parishioner. He left a wife and three children but ill provided for, who seem to have been recipients of the bounty of the Society, which had enrolled him upon its list of missionaries several years before his death. It was probably during his incumbency that St. Thomas's acquired its glebe of three hundred acres and its glebe house, the only one ever owned by any parish during the provincial period.

Mr. Moir continued in New Hanover, first at St. James's, Wilmington, and then at St. Philip's, Brunswick, until about the beginning of 1747, when he removed to Edgecombe upon the invitation of the inhabitants of that large and populous parish, at that time perhaps the most populous in the Province.

In 1743, or early in 1744, Clement Hall, Esq., of Perquimans, in the Commission of the Peace, with a reputation for "honour, diligence and fidelity," who had been for several years a lay reader in his parish, laid before the Bishop of London testimonials of his character, and applied for Holy Orders. After being examined he was ordained Deacon and Priest in 1744, and returned at once to North Carolina with a commission from the Society as their itinerant missionary. He found his patrimony much wasted from want of proper care during his absence. He at once set about the work of his holy calling with the same "honour, diligence and fidelity" which had marked his secular life. Two Sundays in each month he officiated in St. Paul Church, Edenton, and the other Sundays in distant parts of the parish. But regularly every year, in fulfilment of his duty to the wider field, he took his journeys east and west. From the old settlements of Perquimans and Pasquotank, to the distant frontiers of Granville, this eager messenger made his annual or semi-

annual tours, baptizing infants and adults, catechising the children, churching women, and administering the Holy Communion to the rude folk, who learned to love and trust this holy man. Everywhere he preached to such crowds that no house would hold them, but they were forced to seek the shelter of the groves, where the birds were the choristers, and where, in the pauses between their music, they "heard the bass of heaven's deep organ blow." Upon one of these tours, during the pleasant September and October weather of the year 1753, he reports that in thirty-five days he traveled 536 miles, officiated in 23 congregations, baptized 467 white and 21 black children, and 2 white women. Such zeal as this bore fruit in the people upon whom it was poured out. Where other missionaries could find only misery and discouragement, profane people and contentious vestrymen, he found happiness and hope, and some measure of response to his own goodness. The work upon St. Paul's Church, Edenton, was renewed with vigor; even Corbin, Earl Granville's unpopular agent, assured him that he would spare no pains to accomplish the work; and he lived to see it put in a fair way of being completed. In 1755 he lost his house, his books, and pretty much all his personal property, by fire. He went to his reward in 1759, after a ministry of fifteen years. We have no exact account of all his labors, but we may judge the whole from his account of a part. In 1752, when he had run half his course, he estimated that he had travelled 14,000 miles, preached nearly 700 sermons, and baptized more than 6,000 persons, (including several hundred negroes and Indians). He reckoned the number of communicants in his circuit at 400, which, considering the backwardness of the people in those days to come to the Holy Communion, was a wonderful number. In Anderson's "History of the Church of England in the Colonies" the account of him closes with these words: "In weariness and painfulness, yet with faith and hope unbroken, he persevered unto

the end; and \* \* \* worn out with sickness and hard toil, Clement Hall closed, in the bosom of an affectionate and grateful people, a career of pious usefulness which has rarely, if ever, been equalled."

The Rev. James Moir, in Edgecombe, had also a laborious life, and for a while he travelled and preached extensively. A church was built on Tar River, about eight miles above the present town of Tarborough, and also two chapels in other parts of the county, one of which was probably old Conacanara in Halifax. The vestry also took orders for building four others. In 1756 the lower part of the county was made a separate parish, called St. Mary's Parish, which became Mr. Moir's charge. The upper part remained Edgecombe Parish, but soon after became a separate county by the name of Halifax. Mr. Moir is an example of the *Establishment idea* applied to the facts of American colonial life. His case illustrates the whole story of the failure of the Church in the Province. He did not lack abilities or worth, but he was all the time vexing himself and railing at his circumstances because he could not make the established system work. Clement Hall, born in the new country, and desirous simply of bringing the Gospel to bear upon the people, found the system no insuperable barrier, because he was not working the system. James Moir, side by side with him, accomplished little or nothing, because he was fettered by that system under which he had been brought up. He remained in Edgecombe until the summer of 1762, when he removed to St. George's Parish, Northampton county, where there was a church, and also three chapels, though he continued to officiate in St. Mary's until his death in February, 1767. He was one of the Commissioners appointed in 1760 to lay out the town of Tarborough, and perhaps it is to him that we owe the ecclesiastical nomenclature of the streets---St. George's, St. Patrick's, St. David's, and *St. Joshua's*. He also, like Mr. Hall, reports a wonderful

number of baptisms, but is not so exact in his statistics. In one report he excuses himself for this by saying that he had *no one to count the children as he baptized them*, and so could not tell the exact number.

In 1753 there came into the Province the Rev. Alexander Stewart, a missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and minister of St. Thomas' Church, Bath. His name deserves to be put alongside of that of Clement Hall. Until the spring of 1771, through much sickness and fatigue, and amid vexations and hardships, he spoke the word of God to the people of Beaufort, Hyde and Pitt counties, serving thirteen chapels besides his parish church. The negroes and Indians claimed his special care. He visited the remains of the "Attamuskeets," Hatteras and Roanoke tribes of Indians in Hyde county, and endeavored to teach them the principles of Christianity. As agent and superintendent for North Carolina of the society called "Dr. Bray's Associates," he established a school for their benefit. He paid a school-mistress to teach Indian boys and girls, and also one or two negro children, to read, and supplied them with books. The church at Bath, though begun some years before, was not entirely finished until 1762. He suffered much from sickness during the latter part of his life, and upon one occasion had to be carried from Bath to Newbern in a horse litter to consult physicians in regard to a dreadful attack of rheumatism which had deprived him of the use of his limbs. He crowned his work in Bath by sending forward two notable men to England as candidates for Holy Orders, Mr. Peter Blinn and Mr. Nathaniel Blount. The latter did not go over until the second year after Mr. Stewart's death, but we can not doubt that it was his influence which helped to prepare so worthy a successor to stand in his place when he was gone, and to hand down, almost to our day, his testimony to the truth.

The same year which brought Mr. Stewart to Bath gave

the Rev. James Reed to Christ Church, Newbern. He came over from England with his family in response to an offer and appeal sent to England by the vestry of Craven Parish. The special agreement between him and his vestry was confirmed by Act of the Assembly 1754 c. XVI. In 1758 he was made one of the missionaries of the Society. He well deserved the appointment, for besides his church in Newbern he served nine chapels in Craven and Carteret Counties. His long and faithful services can not be adequately presented in a summary. He acted as Chaplain to the Assembly; he built and carried through to such measure of success as it attained, the Newbern Academy. Mr. Reed saw the troubles of 1776 coming on, but he stood to his royalist principles, and he disappears from our North Carolina annals praying heartily for King George, while the drums of marching soldiers drown his voice and the clouds of war wrap him from our view. He left behind him the memory of a man of honor and a faithful minister of God. The patriotic churchmen of Newbern, Nash, and Speight and Leech, thought not the worse of him for bravely siding with the country of his birth.

The Rev. John McDowell in 1754 became minister at Wilmington, by that time grown to be the largest town in in the Province. He was put into orders upon Gov. Dobbs's recommendation, and spent the whole of his ministry in New Hanover, at St. James's, Wilmington, and St. Philip's, Brunswick. In 1760 he was made a missionary of the Society. Handsome churches had some years before this been begun both in Wilmington and in Brunswick, though the latter was not finished until 1768, while the former was still longer in building. Mr. McDowell died in 1763, and was succeeded by the Rev. Mr. Barnett in 1765. The Rev. John Mills became the minister in 1769, and in 1774 the Rev. Nicholas Christian was in charge; we know very little of either of them.

In Edenton the Rev. Clement Hall was succeeded in

1759, immediately upon his death, by the Rev. Daniel Earl. The large and handsome parish church, begun by private subscription before the year 1740, towards which the Lords Proprietors had given £200, was probably so far finished in Mr. Hall's time as to be occupied, but was not completed until many years after. Mr. Earl frequently speaks of its being in a dilapidated condition. He confined his ministrations chiefly to St. Paul's Church, and continued in charge for the greater part, if not the whole, of the Revolution.

The Rev. Thomas Burges became the minister of Edgecombe Parish, Halifax county, in October, 1759. His special agreements made with the vestry of that parish were confirmed by two private acts of the Provincial Assembly, the first by the Act of 1760 c. VII.; the second by Act of 1764, 2d Sess., c. XVII. He continued rector of this parish till the Revolution, or thereabouts. It may be mentioned that when the town of Tarborough was laid off in 1760, and the lots sold, parson Burges bought the lot upon which Calvary Church was erected in 1834. When the church came to be built his grandson, Thomas Burges, Esq., conveyed the lot to the vestry for that purpose.

✧ With the administration of Gov. Tryon a new era of activity in ecclesiastical affairs begins. Gabriel Johnston and Arthur Dobbs were both zealous churchmen, but Tryon's activity in seeking to advance the cause of the Church and of religion in the Province, was quite beyond anything which had been seen before. Yet it was not the zeal of a mere sectarian bigotry. All our historians have admitted that he met the dissenting interests of the country with a generous appreciation and tolerance which to a very great extent won their good will. Upon the outbreak of the first Regulation troubles in 1768 the Presbyterian ministers united in an address to him, in which they declared that they had the highest sense of the justice and benevolence of his administration, under which they say that they en-



joyed all the blessings of civil and religious liberty, or words to that effect. They also put forth a pastoral letter to their people, quite as ardent in its expressions of loyalty to King George as was parson Micklejohn's sermon before the troops at Hillsboro' upon the text, "The powers that be are ordained of God." Gov. Tryon, on his part, always speaks of the Presbyterians, and also of the Quakers, with the highest respect. As a civil administrator, bred in the school of military discipline, he had less respect for the ruder and more extravagant forms of religious enthusiasm---the "New Lights" and the "Separatists"---who were becoming so numerous in some quarters. But no complaint has come down to us from any religious body against his ecclesiastical administration. His zeal for the Church, and his great interest in the business of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, probably had their origin in some close relationship to that work. In 1730 the treasurer of the Society was "William Tryon, Merchant, Lime Street, London;" a few years later "William and Thomas Tryon" shared the office. It is probable that Gov. Tryon was a son of one of these, and that his boyhood had been nurtured in close association with the venerable Missionary Society of the Church of England. Certain it is that he zealously promoted the interests of the Church in North Carolina, and all her ministers found in his house hospitality and hearty sympathy, and in him a ready and indefatigable friend.

The exact state of the ecclesiastical laws during Dobbs's administration is not very clear, owing to the repeal of some laws by royal proclamation, and the consequent failure of other laws dependent upon them. As well as I can understand, it was about as follows: A number of acts were passed from 1754 to 1764, but from one cause or another they were repealed by the Assembly or disallowed by the King in Council, until in 1762 the Province was somehow left without any legal vestries whatever, and the ministers



had to manage as they could. This was remedied, however, by the passage of the act of 1764 c. II., making elaborate provision for the election of vestrymen and the support of the ministers, etc., which was to continue only five years, but which, with some slight amendments, remained the law of the land until the close of the royal government. This law raised the minister's salary to £133 per annum, and provided better security for his getting it. It still, however, left the election of vestrymen to the freeholders of the parish, and thereby winked at the disregard of the law in those parishes where the inhabitants did not desire to have the services of the Church. But the vicious system of a legal establishment was bearing its fruit, and we see a sign of it, in this act of 1764, in the provision that any person elected a vestryman who should refuse to qualify, *if a known dissenter*, should be fined three pounds. Heretofore, dissenters had been excused from serving; now they alone are forced by a penalty to serve if elected. This points to the fact that the law had been defeated by dissenters taking advantage of the former indulgence of the law, and procuring themselves to be elected vestrymen, in order that by refusing to serve they might render the law ineffectual.

So far as we know only one contest took place under these acts between churchmen and dissenters in regard to the enforcement of the law. It happened most fortunately for peace and harmony that each section of the Province had been settled by a homogeneous population. In the northern counties, from Orange to the seacoast, and generally throughout the seaboard, the people were almost wholly English, and professed an allegiance to the Church. West of these counties the Presbyterians had their settlements, and the Lutherans and Dutch Reformed theirs, but each in separate and distinct communities. The upper Cape Fear country was wholly Presbyterian. In the dissenting communities vestrymen were elected and performed

their civil duties, but as they wanted no Episcopal clergy or services they ignored their ecclesiastical functions. The Moravians, upon their own request, were organized into a separate parish called Dobbs Parish, and transacted their own parish business by themselves. This order of things was usually respected by the Governor, the Assembly, and the Episcopal clergy. When in 1766 the Rev. Andrew Morton was sent out from England by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to take charge of St. Martin's Parish, Mecklenburg County, he wrote back to the Society that upon inquiry he learned that the inhabitants of that parish were all Covenanters and Seceders, and therefore, with the consent of Gov. Tryon, he had agreed to take charge of St. George's Parish in Bertie.

But in Rowan, where there were many Presbyterians, there was also a strong colony of churchmen, men of English blood, who had come from Maryland and Pennsylvania. They desired a minister, and in 1769, or at the very beginning of 1770, the Rev. Theodorus Swaine Drage, who had been licensed for North Carolina by the Bishop of London the 29th of the preceding May, came to Salisbury and undertook to have a vestry elected. On Easter Monday a vestry was elected, but it was composed largely of Presbyterian elders, and all its members were pledged not to enforce the laws. Mr. Drage, in his letters to Gov. Tryon, asserted that his party were in a numerical majority, and, as the Lutherans seem to have acted with him, he was possibly correct in this estimate. But he says that most of his people were new-comers into the Province, and that on account of the troubles in the Earl of Granville's land office, they had been unable to get patents for their land, and so were not technically freeholders. Mr. Drage undertook to argue the question with the Presbyterian elders, alleging that as they had chosen to come into the Province knowing its laws, they ought to obey those laws until they could procure their repeal. Failing of converting them, he

appealed to the Governor, and then got the Governor to lay the case before the General Assembly; they declined to interfere, and Mr. Drage seems to have left Salisbury after a year or two.

It will be remembered that the legislation of the Province up to this time, while recognizing the right of the clergy of the Church to perform the marriage ceremony, had not authorized its performance by any other ministers. At the time of this legislation this was no hardship, because there were no other ministers in the Colony who considered this a part of their ministerial functions; but when the Presbyterian settlements were made in the up-country and along the Cape Fear, the Presbyterian ministers continued to marry their people as they had been accustomed to do. One of the acts passed in Gov. Tryon's administration, and generally believed to have passed by his procurement, was an act (1766 c. IX.) to validate these marriages and to make it lawful thereafter for dissenting or Presbyterian ministers to perform this function. It is to be noted, however, that the preamble of the act recites that the validity of these marriages had been called in question, (though in law they were unquestionably valid), not because they had been performed by Presbyterian clergymen. There is not a particle of evidence that any one attacked them on this ground; their validity was questioned because the Presbyterian ministers, not being named in the Act of 1741, had considered themselves at liberty to violate the terms of the law in other respects, and had been in the habit of performing marriages without publication of the banns or the procuring of a license, as was required of all persons. It seems an ungracious provision of this law, meant to be an act of courtesy as well as of justice, to the growing settlements along the Yadkin and the Catawba, that it provided that the Episcopal minister in the parish where the marriage was performed should be entitled to the fees, if he had not refused to perform the service. This, however, was of

less consequence, as there was not a single minister in any parish in the Province where a Presbyterian minister resided. And when, a few years afterwards, the two bodies did become mingled together in a few localities, there is no reason to think that any minister of the Church ever so far forgot Christian courtesy as to desire to take advantage of this provision.\* Indeed, it may be said that in no one of the thirteen Colonies was there less ill feeling between religious denominations. Whatever may have been the theory of the law, or the provisions of our Colonial statutes, Christian moderation and charity so controlled their application that they never became a source of irritation or of popular discontent.

The effect of Gov. Tryon's interest in the Church, and of his constant correspondence with the Bishop of London and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, was soon apparent. During the seven years of his administration the number of clergy in the Province rose from five to eighteen. These were distributed in different parts of the Province from Salisbury and Hillsboro' to the seacoast, some supported solely by their stipend from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the voluntary offerings of the people, and devoting themselves to gathering congregations in new parts of the field; others settled over established congregations, and busy trying to lay foundations of educational and other institutions.

It is hardly fair to find fault with men of those days for not

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\*This act of 1766 c. IX., speaks in the preamble of "Presbyterian or Dissenting" ministers, evidently using the words as synonymous, and not as representing two different classes; and in the enacting clauses it uses the word "Presbyterian" alone. This was probably because at that time the Presbyterian ministers were the only dissenting ministers in the Province who considered the performance of the marriage ceremony for their people part of their pastoral duty. It has sometimes been stated that this act of 1766 c. IX. was repealed by royal proclamation, but there is no note of such repeal in our statute books. It is brought forward in every revision and was the law of the land for the rest of our colonial period.

seeing with our eyes, but it seems strange to us that the churchmen of the Province of North Carolina should not have recognized how impossible it was to build up the Church upon the English parochial system. The support provided by the most liberal legislation was totally insufficient for the maintenance of the clergy and the building up of church institutions. All sorts of shifts had to be resorted to by the vestries, even to finishing their churches by selling the fee-simple of the pews, and by lotteries. It is to the credit of the people of Edenton that they protested against selling the pews in St. Paul's, and petitioned the Assembly to finish it by a tax upon the parish, so that all, paying equally, might have equal rights in their house of worship. But while the laws were inadequate to the support of the Church, they exasperated such opposition as there might be to the Church in the several parishes where its worship was maintained, and they kept the people from realizing and performing their duty.

In another way the system was unnatural and pernicious. In theory the right of presentation to a parish was clearly in the King and his representative, the Governor. The Charters of Charles II., under which the people or their Assemblies were continually asserting their rights, had expressly provided that the right of presentation to all churches, chapels and oratories should be in the proprietors, and after 1728 the King stood in place of the proprietors; this right was also vested in the Crown by act of the Assembly. But Tryon's exercise of this right of presentation provoked much opposition, and occasioned controversies between himself and several of the parishes, even where there was a perfect willingness to receive the minister whom he proposed to induct.

But for a time the affairs of the Church seemed to prosper, and all testimonies agree that it yet retained, and continued to retain down to the Revolution, a majority of the population of the Province. In large and populous



sections there were no dissenters at all, and where they were most numerous in the English settlements (as distinguished from the Scotch and Scotch-Irish,) many of them declared that they were dissenters only because they had no opportunity of enjoying the ministrations of the Church. At the beginning of the Revolution there were only two Baptist Associations in North Carolina. The Methodists were becoming numerous, and had local preachers here and there, but as a body they were still loyal to the Church. When Mr. Whitefield preached at Newbern he publicly proclaimed that he was a faithful minister and son of the Church of England, and he found fault with Mr. Reed, the minister at Newbern, because he gave the name of Methodists to an extravagant sect in that part of the country who had separated from the Church.

One of the best remembered of the clergy who came into the Province during Gov. Tryon's administration, is the Rev. George Micklejohn, S. T. D., minister of St. Matthew's parish, Orange county, from 1766 to 1776. He preached loyalty to the Regulators in 1768,\* and so when, following his teaching, the Regulators of Alamance, (which was then in Orange county and a part of his parish,) marched to join McDonald at Cross Creek, he seems to have gone with them, probably as their chaplain, and to have been captured with the other Tories, Highlanders and

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\*When Gov. Tryon and his militia forces, raised to put down the first "Regulation," in 1768, were encamped at Hillsboro, Sunday, September 25th, Rev. George Micklejohn, rector of St. Matthew's, Hillsboro, and Rev. Henry Patillo, an eminent Presbyterian minister of Granville County, were appointed to preach to the troops. Mr. Micklejohn took for his text: "The powers that be are ordained of God," etc., Romans xiii.: 1-2. He was so well pleased with his effort that he had it printed by James Davis, of Newbern, and presented one hundred copies to the next Assembly. What was the character of Mr. Patillo's discourse we know not. *He did not include that sermon among those published at Wilmington in 1788.* But we know that he was quite as stout a supporter of government in 1768 as was Micklejohn himself, and in the pastoral letter put out by him and his brother ministers, they bring to bear upon the Regulators the same text, Romans xiii.: 1-2.



Regulators, at Moore's Creeek in February 1776. The Provincial Congress at Halifax paroled him the 3d of May following, but did not allow him to return to Hillsboro lest he should corrupt the patriotism of his parishioners. He was required to go to Perquimans County, and to remain there on the south side of the river. We shall hear of him again in the story of the Church in North Carolina.

Another well remembered name is Charles Cupples, minister of St. John's parish, Bute county, (now Warren and Franklin), from 1766 until some time during or after the Revolution. Though an Englishman, he took the American side in the contest. While his name and character are well remembered we know little of the particulars of his life. He was specially interested in the welfare of the slaves, and endeavored to impress upon their owners the propriety of coming up with them to baptism, and of acting as god-fathers and god-mothers for these poor people to whom they owed such sacred duties.

We begin now to find a number of young men coming forward among our people, and offering themselves for the work of the ministry. We have no complete list, but a number of names appear incidentally in the records of those times.

First we have James Macartney. After having been an assistant teacher in the Newbern Academy, he went to England for Holy Orders in May, 1768, and the following July he was ordained. Gov. Tryon placed him in Granville Parish, where he had Richard Henderson for one of his vestrymen, and the Presbyterian divine, Henry Pattillo, for one of his neighbors. He says he found many Presbyterians in his parish, and he seems to have lived in peace and charity with them.

In the same year Henry John Burges and Francis Johnston went over, recommended by parson Burges, the father of the former, and Gov. Tryon; the next year Edward Jones, recommended by parson Micklejohn, and Peter

Blinn, by parson Stewart, of Bath. Gov. Tryon joins Mr. Stewart in giving Mr. Blinn the highest testimonials. There were others, also, who went from this Province to seek ordination to the same holy office. Their names may be included in the clergy lists of this period, but the scanty records of that day do not enable us to identify them. To anticipate a year or two, so as to close this subject, it may be added that Nathaniel Blount, another member of Mr. Stewart's parish in Beaufort county, and Charles Pettigrew, from St. Paul's Church, Edenton, were ordained shortly after this time, and returned to serve the Church faithfully and long in their native country.

The Rev. Henry John Burges, after his return from England, was minister in St. Mary's Parish, Edgecombe, for a year or two. He then moved to Virginia, and had a school in Southampton county for many years, where a number of eminent men were educated, among them the late Dr. Simmons J. Baker and President Wm. H. Harrison. The Rev. Francis Johnston became the minister of Society parish, Bertie, and Edward Jones of St. Stephen's parish, Johnston county. Nathaniel Blount succeeded the Rev. Alexander Stewart, who had died a year or two before Mr. Blount's ordination, and Mr. Pettigrew, after a short service in Berkely parish, Perquimans, succeeded the Rev. Daniel Earl in St. Paul's Church, Edenton.

Of Mr. Peter Blinn I have seen no account after the note of his ordination by the Bishop of London in September, 1769. It may be that he did not live to take up the work of God in North Carolina as a minister. Many a noble spirit crossed the ocean from America stirred by a holy ambition of returning as a herald of the Cross, to whom God, in His inscrutable wisdom, denied that privilege. The perils of the ocean, the accidents of travel, the infectious diseases then so terribly destructive, the great length and expense of the journey, all these were a sad hindrance to the increase of the number of native Ameri-

can ministers upon this continent. It is said that at least ten per cent. of those who undertook this journey for ordination died without having been able to return to take up the work. Our own annals contain as pathetic a story illustrating these difficulties and hardships as can well be imagined.

Sometime in the year 1768 Mr. Edward Jones, of the Province of North Carolina, applied to the Rev. George Micklejohn of St. Matthew's, Hillsboro', who seems to have been his pastor, and laid before him his desire to serve God in the holy ministry. Upon examination, Mr. Micklejohn approved his purpose of offering himself as a candidate for orders, and gave him such information as he could, concerning the time required for the journey, the expenses of travel, and the like. Upon consideration, Mr. Jones found that the expense of travel and of living during the time he must remain in England, would require a much larger sum than he could command; but as he had set this holy calling before himself as the work of his life he determined to keep back nothing. He therefore sold his patrimony, notwithstanding the great loss incurred thereby in the wretched condition of our Colonial currency, converted the proceeds into available funds, and provided with letters and testimonials from the Rev. Mr. Micklejohn, he set out for England. In due time he arrived at Liverpool, but almost immediately upon landing he was stricken down with sickness, and lay for a long time helpless and suffering. Gradually, as he lingered on, his money slipped away in the many expenses of lodging, medicine and attendance, so that, when able once more to resume his journey, he found himself absolutely penniless and alone in a strange land. He set out however to make the rest of his journey on foot, and thus made his way to London, obtaining a scanty supply of food upon the journey by selling such articles of clothing as were not indispensable. Footsore and weary he at length reached London and made his way to the

residence of the Bishop. He made know his business, though not his sad plight, and laid before the Bishop the letter and papers given him by Mr. Micklejohn. These proved to be in some way informal or insufficient, and the Bishop informed him that he must communicate with his friends in North Carolina, and procure certain other documents before he could feel justified in ordaining him. Mr. Jones, at this mortifying intelligence, left the Bishop, in utter perplexity and discouragement. He wandered about the streets in a state of desperation bordering on insanity. He afterwards confessed, with expressions of shame, that more than once he was on the point of committing suicide. Penniless in a great city, of all places the most solitary to him who is without friends, utterly ignorant of places and of persons, we can imagine his forlorn state. Whether this lasted a day or several days, we do not know. He may have had some trifles of clothing or other property to dispose of to keep him alive a day or two. His deliverance from this depth of woe has a touch of romance which sheds a soft light over the sad picture. While in the depth of his misery, he hears by some accident that Gov. Tryon has a sister in London, Miss Tryon. With a feeling which a North Carolinian can still understand, it comes to him that she must be interested in the country which her brother governs. He finds out her abode and appeals to her sympathy and compassion. He had not judged amiss. Miss Tryon responded most graciously to his appeal, and in a way which showed her tact as well as her generosity. She introduced Mr. Jones to a certain Capt. Collett, who had been in North Carolina, and they at once put him out of his perplexity and distress by their friendly interest and help. He wrote to Gov. Tryon, March 29th, 1769, giving this account of his experience since he had arrived in England, and requesting the Governor to send him such testimonials as should meet the demands of the Bishop. But he did not have to wait for an answer to

his letter. The record shows that Mr. Edward Jones was licensed for North Carolina by the Bishop of London on the 29th of May, 1769, just two months after the date of his letter to Gov. Tryon. And very shortly thereafter we find him minister of St. Stephen's Parish, Johnston County. We may be very sure that he had always a good word for the gracious ladies of the Governor's family.

With the administration of Gov. Martin there seems to come a relaxing of the tension in the life of the community, and our ecclesiastical affairs shared the general languor. Whatever may be thought of Tryon, his vigor and administrative talents are not denied. Gov. Martin had neither his force of character nor his address in the management of men. Perhaps the very eagerness with which Gov. Tryon had pushed the work of supplying vacant parishes with clergymen caused a reaction when the vigorous hand was removed from the helm. Almost without exception the ministers who came in under Tryon's administration were men of force and of zeal. But there was a great temptation to relax effort in a country where there was no oversight exercised; and the low tone of feeling and living in the community must have had a depressing influence upon the clergy. It had long been felt by persons throughout the Colonies that an Episcopal Church without a Bishop was an absurdity. The question need not be discussed here. I will only say that the need of a Bishop was apparent both to our Governors and to the clergy themselves. Time and again they wrote to the Society and to the Bishop of London that a Bishop was absolutely necessary in order to the success of the Church in America. The English Bishops saw it. George III. unlike his Hanoverian predecessors, loved the Church, and was a most religious and exemplary man. He would gladly have seen the Church truly established in America and organized upon the Apostolic model. But, as under his grandfather, George II., Sir Robert Walpole had defeated the



hopes and plans of such great men as Secker, Butler and Berkely, so the ministers of George III. hindered and thwarted every scheme devised for the sending of Bishops to the Colonies. To the miserable union of Church and State in England we owe it that with all the appeals of our clergy and of our Governors, and with all the many acts of our people through their representatives in the General Assembly in favor of the Church, the Church had never its proper organization or constitution in the Province of North Carolina. The Mother Church was enslaved and her daughter was bound with her. When the political changes of 1776 put an end to the civil status of the Church, so thoroughly had State patronage done its evil work, and so entirely had both people and clergy been taught to lean upon a broken reed, that while a majority of the people of the State were nominally her children, and our great men of North Carolina were almost without exception her own, the Church stood helpless, blind, paralyzed. Not until all the men who came out of Egypt had died in the wilderness could Israel enter into the Land of Promise; and not until a new generation of churchmen had grown up in North Carolina, who looked upon the Church as a spiritual kingdom, could any permanent organization be effected, or the upward course begun. It is a significant fact that the Diocese of North Carolina was organized just seven months after the death of Nathaniel Blount, the last survivor of our Colonial clergy.

One or two things need to be said before closing. In the first place, such civil recognition as was given to the clergy of the Church, and such support as was derived from public taxation, was given by the people of North Carolina themselves, acting through their representatives in General Assembly. It has been affirmed by grave historians, and repeated by all the generation of lesser writers, that the clergy of the Church were paid by the British government. This view is presented by writers of



our local history and biography with perfect assurance of its truth. There is not one particle of truth in it. Our North Carolina people did what was done in giving the support of the State to the Church. But it is further to be remembered that the laws were so framed that they were inoperative except in those communities where the great body of the people were attached to the Church. And lastly, in this connection, there was practically no discontent among the people. We have the testimony of the whole body of the Presbyterian ministers, the largest and most intelligent body of dissenters in the Province, that under Tryon, the most masterful of the royal governors, they enjoyed the blessings of good government and civil and religious freedom, according to the conception of religious freedom prevalent at that day.

Another and a more serious popular misapprehension needs to be corrected. It is frequently alleged that the character of the Colonial clergy explains the decay of the Church. Now from the nature of the case there were unworthy ministers during colonial times as there have been since. And the want of any supervision of the clergy aggravated the evil. But it is a most gross and groundless slander to represent the clergy of that period as being on the whole an unworthy, much less an immoral or irreligious class. I have not consciously omitted in this paper the name of one clergyman against whom there is serious evidence of greivous misconduct, nor have I failed to point out the fact that there were charges against him. True it is that as time went on, and various religious bodies grew strong in the State, bodies which had bitter prejudices against the Church, they did not spare the reputation of her ministers, *living or dead*. There are yet clergymen amongst the most honored in our conventions, who can remember how in their early ministry the purest life was no security against charges of immorality and dissipation. Happily we live in better times. Living men can

live down slanders. But who shall protect the dead? I have studied the history of our provincial period with some attention. I have sought out, as well as I could, the scanty memorials of our brethren who first trod these shores as ambassadors for Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. And while I have seen and deplored sins and follies here and there, I have thanked God for the good examples, the faithful labors, the persevering zeal, the holy devotion, of many of those, our brethren, who having finished their course in faith, do now rest from their labors.





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*Jos. Blount Cheshire, Jr.*





